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School Committee Minutes 11/24/2009

Approved by the Arlington School Committee February 23, 2010

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2009
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Joe Curran, Chair Denise Burns, Vice Chair
Joe Curro, Secretary Leba Heigham
Ronald Spangler Cindy Starks
Jeff Thielman

Interim Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie
Interim Assistant Superintendent: Wallis Raemer,
Chief Financial Officer: Diane Johnson
Student Representatives: Lindsay Diranian, Tori Hegarty

Excused Absence: Special Education Director: Mark Ryder

Mr. Curran opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

*Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 9:25 p.m. and returned at 9:29 p.m.
Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 9:28 p.m. and returned at 9:37 p.m.
Ms. Starks exited the meeting at 9:30 p.m. and returned at 9:35 p.m.
Mr. Curro exited the meeting at 9:35 p.m. and returned at 9:37 p.m.
Dr. Spangler exited the meeting at 9:45 p.m. and returned at 9:49 p.m.*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

Lindsey Diranian, student representative, congratulated the following students who were chosen for the Northeast District band orchestra and chorus: Eric Cheng, orchestra, Andrea Delgado, band, Holly Everett, orchestra, Simon Ginet, chorus, Siddharth Hiregowdara, chorus, Tina Kambill, band, Katrina Rosenberg, orchestra Sylvia Rosenberg, orchestra, Ryan Salocks, orchestra, Will Sullivan, orchestra, Brenda Tang, chorus, Ken Triu, orchestra.

Mr. Curran wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Curro invited everyone to the Town Hall auditorium on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 from 7 - 9 p.m. for a budget simulation exercise and encourages the community to participate in a school district exercise to help with the constraints the School Committee face with the budget.

DISCUSSION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGETARY DIRECTIVES IN TERMS OF SCHEDULING AND STAFFING

The School Committee had requested Dr. Kathleen Bodie to provide examples of various ideas on how our schools would look over the next few years due to budget cuts and with administration teams creating different scenarios for class sizes, blocked scheduling and reductions across the board, as an exercise only.

The committee members discussed the changes suggested by Mr. Skidemore to his staff dated November 16, 2009.

Hypothetical reductions at the elementary level – both with and without consolidation scenarios -- were presented, too. The committee members encouraged the administration to keep committee members informed regarding any major budget announcements to staff. Mr. Curro pointed out that a timeline had been voted on and should be referenced regarding the budget process. Budget Subcommittee members had received a document that had been circulating at the high school and which stated that the Arlington School Committee had five million dollars in reserves. Committee members and administration stressed that the document's assertions were false.

EDUCATIONAL ASPECT OF BLOCK SCHEDULING

When Mr. Skidmore was asked how he could maintain the same level of academics at the high school with fewer teachers due to a budget shortfall next year, he suggested a 4x4 block schedule around four classes per semester and presented it to the staff at Arlington High School. The committee members discussed the proposal and expressed the desire to continue the discussion after listening to what the community says at the budget simulation exercise on December 1 at Town Hall.

A PREVIEW OF TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES/NEEDS

Dr. Raemer, Mr. Good and Ms. D'Agostino spoke regarding the technology initiatives and needs at all levels in the Arlington Public Schools and noted that teachers are now presenting workshops in the classrooms and using blogs, Twitter, Skype, and other social networking tools as part of their daily work in the classroom.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Curro reported on all correspondence received: Massachusetts School Board Authority invitation to participate in Feasibility and Schematic Design Phase, Arlington Public Schools FY 10 Budget Summary for November 22, 2009, Thanksgiving Day Football Game notice, school newsletters, invitation to winter concert December 16, 2009

CONSENT AGENDA all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

***Approval of Warrant #10068 dated November 10, 2009 in the amount of \$ 406,317.72.**

***Approval of Minutes: School Committee meeting minutes October 13, 2009 and October 27, 2009**

Ms. Burns moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Voted: 6-0 (Dr. Spangler had exited the room)

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Kathleen Bodie congratulated Christine Sharkey and Lucille Nicholson on how smoothly the Brackett School H1N1 clinic went. Dr. Raemer presented data on Home Schooling. Dr. Bodie suggested that the Committee appoint Mr. Thielman, due to his knowledge working with the Permanent Town Building Committee and the Thompson School Rebuild committee, to the Massachusetts School Board Authority Design Selection Panel along with herself and Brian Sullivan.

Ms. Burns moved to appoint Mr. Jeff Thielman to the Massachusetts School Board Authority Design Selection Panel, seconded by Dr. Spangler.

Voted: 7-0

ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Burns encouraged School Committee members to review the Education Reform bill and write a letter to our legislators regarding the bill.

Mr. Curro publicized the public budget simulation at Town Hall on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Mr. Curro attended the Veterans Day Observance and the Bishop School Chili fest.

Dr. Spangler encouraged everyone to attend the Public Visioning Session, December 1, 2009 regarding the school budget.

Ms. Heigham noted that the District Accountability meeting on December 8th, was cancelled due to a union negotiation meeting and that the next meeting would be held on December 22, 2009.

Ms. Starks said that the Community Relations Subcommittee had started a discussion on the Parmenter and Crosby

Schools and will be holding a meeting soon. Ms. Starks said she had attended the Arlington Youth Health Safety Meeting and also would like to look into revenue around advertising at sporting events.

Mr. Curran encouraged everyone to attend the Arlington High School versus Arlington Catholic Football game on Thanksgiving at Peirce Field.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Heigham moved to enter into Executive Session at 9:58 p.m. for the purpose to strategize with respect to collective bargaining or litigation and to return to regular session only to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Roll Call: Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Dr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Ms. Burns No and Mr. Curran Yes

Voted: 6-1

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Spangler moved to adjourn at 10:26 p.m., seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 6 - 0

Respectfully submitted by

Karen M. Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

Arlington School Committee/jc